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Viewing cable 07SANSALVADOR2423, ZABLAH BOWS OUT OF SALVADORAN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

#07SANSALVADOR2423.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07SANSALVADOR2423	2007-12-18 21:51	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy San Salvador

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.wikileaks.elfaro.net/es/201106/notas/4565/>

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSN #2423 3522151
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 182151Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8743
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 002423

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2012

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ES](#)

SUBJECT: ZABLAH BOWS OUT OF SALVADORAN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

REF: A. SAN SALVADOR 1943
[1](#)B. SAN SALVADOR 2169
[1](#)C. SAN SALVADOR 2406

Classified By: Ambassador Charles L. Glazer, Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (U) Summary: On Saturday, Arturo Zablah ended his pre-candidacy for the Salvadoran Presidency. The centrist politician had hoped, through his Alliance for Change platform, to mount a strong third-party challenge to ARENA and the FMLN, but his candidacy was unable to pick up sufficient momentum. Though out of the Presidential race, Zablah could still end up playing a role in the campaign or the next government. End Summary.

¶2. (U) At a press conference December 14, three months after launching his campaign and movement to create a new centrist political movement in Salvadoran politics, Arturo Zablah abandoned his bid for El Salvador's Presidency. Zablah, a prominent businessman and former ARENA Minister of Economy under President Calderon Sol told the press he had failed in building the strong political alliance needed for a viable bid.

¶3. (U) FMLN leadership, which earlier this year rebuffed Zablah's overtures to head its presidential ticket, has not commented publicly on Zablah's exit. President Saca, for his part, was quoted in press reports saying that Zablah has "many friends in ARENA" and that "the doors to the party are always open." Zablah has stated that he will not "play the polarization game" by supporting another candidate in the Presidential race.

¶4. (C) Two days prior to his announcement, Polcouns spoke with Zablah, and at the time Zablah said he was 85 percent sure he would end his pre-candidacy at some point over the weekend. Zablah said that he felt that the level of support available for a third candidate (aside from ARENA and FMLN) was diminishing. Political polarization, he said, was increasing and consuming all the oxygen, leaving nothing for a centrist alternative.

¶5. (U) Comment: From the beginning, Zablah has told us that he would only continue a viable campaign. His inability to ultimately bring the PDC into a joint campaign with the FDR and CD no doubt let much of the air out of his campaign's sails. While the Salvadoran political landscape is extremely polarized and the Zablah camp was unable to carve out significant support at the political center, the causal relationship is less clear than Zablah might claim. The FMLN ticket headed by Mauricio Funes has made a clear and conscious effort to run a moderate campaign with appeal far beyond its traditional base. Absent a declared ARENA candidate, Funes has been successful in portraying himself as a center-left alternative to an ARENA president. The early FMLN success combined with Zablah's failure to gain the backing of a strong political machine, surely figured strongly in Zablah's decision-making calculus. End Comment.

Glazer